

Glenda Wiles

From: Chris Neher [Bioecon@montana.com]
Sent: Tuesday, September 18, 2007 10:35 AM
To: Glenda Wiles
Subject: Stream Setbacks

Dear Commissioner Rokosch,

Yesterday I received in the mail a letter from an individual/organization opposing currently proposed stream setback requirements for Ravalli County. The gist of the letter was that such setbacks (100 ft in my case on Three Mile Creek) would diminish the value of my streamside land and thus should also lead to a reduction in my property taxes on the land. The letter further encouraged streamside landowners to contact the Commissioners and let them know they will expect to see their taxes go down should setbacks go into place.

I really don't know where to start on this line of logic, but let me be clear that my wife and I would consider consistent setback requirements to enhance rather than diminish land values adjacent to streams and rivers. In any event, we have about 1,000 feet of perennial creek on our property that with a 100 foot setback would preclude about 4 acres from building. Since I only pay about \$6 per acre taxes on this land, I don't feel too awfully burdened as it is.

Protecting the riparian corridor on our own property has done more to enhance the value of our land than many other improvements we have made. Requiring reasonable setbacks will reduce riprap constriction and channelizing of waters that increases erosion and exacerbates downstream flooding problems during high water events.

I encourage you and your fellow Commissioners not to be unduly influenced by the specious argument that stream setbacks necessarily decrease property values. I am aware of no evidence that in the aggregate such a reduction in value would occur. What such a restriction would do is increase riparian health, benefit wildlife in the long run, and stop upstream landowners from engaging in protection of homes built too close to waterways, and thus damaging the streamway and downstream stakeholders.

Respectfully,

Chris Neher
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Ravalli County Commissioners

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